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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA KIRSTEN MADISON; WHA/CEN; SOUTHCOM ALSO  
FOR POLAD; NSC FOR DAN FISK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PM](#) [PREL](#) [KJUS](#) [KCRM](#)  
SUBJECT: PANAMA ORDERS ARREST OF EX-NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT  
ALEMAN

REF: PANAMA 00610

11. (SBU) Panamanian Judge Adolfo Mejia ordered on 11 August 2006, via Interpol, the arrest of former Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Aleman and three of his accomplices who were ordered to appear in court on 25 August 2006. Aleman is accused of laundering USD 58.2 million through Panamanian banks and businesses. The GOP froze Aleman's Panamanian assets but the funds have not yet been returned to the GON.

12. (C) Comment: The ruling has little practical implication since Nicaraguan law does not permit extradition. This arrest order on money laundering charges erodes Aleman's credibility, further tarnishes him with corruption charges, and could further erode Aleman's standing in the Nicaraguan political scene. Panamanian Prosecutor Mercedes de Leon, who is also responsible for the Posada Carriles case, may view the Aleman warrant as an easy victory with little potential backlash and a low-cost way to burnish her anti-corruption credentials. Embassy will continue to follow this case. End comment.  
EATON